

(1)

A True  
ACCOUNT  
OF A  
FIGHT

BETWEEN  
Captain *John Leech*, Commander of the  
Ship *Ant* of London, of 14 Guns, and 19 Men, from  
*Jamaica*, And a *French Privateer* of 24 Guns, and some  
Petty-rogues: As it came in a Letter to his Owners from  
*Plymouth*, Dated the Second of this Instant *January*,  
1689.

Licensed *January 8th. 1689.*

THE 29th. of *December* in the Morning at day-light having  
not made the Land, but reckoning our selves very near, the  
Wind being at West North-West, moderate clear Weather,  
I sent a Man up in the top to look about, who immediately  
cried out, *A Sail on our Starboard Quarter, and I think Land on  
our Lee Bow*; expecting the Sail to be what she was, I called up all  
Hands to make a clear Ship, and sling the Yards, and get the Ship in  
a fighting Posture, which required more time than we had then to  
spend to do it Authentick, being disordered by much Tempestuous  
Weather, and a Sea ship'd the 18th. of *December* at Night, which  
broke in some of our Stern, and spoiled a great many of our small  
Arms, and had put us much out of Fighting Posture, in which we  
kept always before, and withal wash'd away our Wads out of the  
Garlings, and where they were hung up, so that we had nothing to  
make more of left us, but our own Men with their Rugs, Blankets,  
and what Cloaths came first to hand, supplied that want, and stood  
courageously by me all the time of Fight. He came up with us with-  
in Gun-shot at half an hour past Seven of the Clock in the Morning,  
with *English* Colours abroad, which I perceiving, caused our Colours  
to be hoisted fast to the Staff. When he came nigher, he struck his  
*English* Colours, and hoisted his *French* Ensign, ran a Head, and fired  
a Gun over our Quarter, Commanding us to Strike; so desiring God  
to be my Assistance, I fired a Gun off the Quarter-Deck in Defence,  
so he came up within half Pistol shot of us, and poured in a Volly of  
small

small shot of about an hundred Arms, with a whole Broad-side of Round, and Bar, and Patridge, besides Petteraroes, with which my Second Mate was killed, and no one else Wounded, blessed be God for it. After this, although he would have boarded us, but he received our Broad-side, and cleared off, and loaded again, and came up and did in the like manner as before on the Larboard-side, and running a-head, and falling a-stern, gave us the other fresh Broad-side on the Starboard-side: continuing in this posture running up one side, and backing the Stern on the other side as fast as he could load and fire with small and great Shot till Twelve of the Clock, at which time our Main-Mast fell, and he ascended some Damage done us under Water, and was forced to bring his Ship to the Oar for the space of three Glasses, in which time we got our Deck cleared, and the broken Mast and Rigging over-board, and all in readiness to receive him again. Our Men now were more Courageous than at the beginning (Glory be to God that gave the Hearts.) After this, he came up with as much Fury as possibly he could on the Larboard-side, and fired as fast as he could, laying us a-board on the Bow, but cleared off again, and entered to the North. This master he continued on our Larboard-side, loading and firing, till half an hour past Five at Night, at which time our Mizzen-Mast came by the board, and some of our Cotton on the Poop took fire, and then he cleared near us, as though he would have come on Board us, but through God's Assistance we got both our Mizzen-Mast and Rigging all clear from the Ship, and the fire in the Cotton was put out, and then he brought too, and left us. Our eight serviceable Guns that we had, did not lye still all the day any more than his. At Night the Wind vered more Southerly, and we steered with that little Sail God hath lent us North, in hopes to make the Land, and in the Morning it pleased God that we were far within a League and a half of *Risk Inlet*, and *Plymouth Sound* opened to us: for which Mercy and Deliverance I desire to return Thanks to Almighty God.

The Ship will take a long time sitting, for she is a perfect Wreck; the more we look about her, the more disabled we find her: we have abundance more Shot in her Hull than I expected, above three hundred. As to the Mizzen-Mast, and Main-Mast, with all the Rigging and Sails, they are quite gone: the Fore-Mast is much wounded, together with the Boltspirit, and cannot be made Serviceable: the Fore-yard, and Sprit-sail-yard are in twain: the Fore-top-mast and Fore-top-sail only remain sound, but the Rigging and Sails much shattered; both our Decks are shot in pieces: our fine carved work Galleries and Stairs etc very much defaced and torn away with shot, and one of our Great Guns split, so that I believe Five Hundred Pounds will not Repair and make her as good as she was.

The Captain and his Men behaving themselves so Bravely, the Officers are making a Poem to Present him.

When he came sight of the English Fleet, he thought of his God.

**L O N D O N.**

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